# MOLDAVIAN LEGENDS

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Kishinev
Literatura artistica 1984

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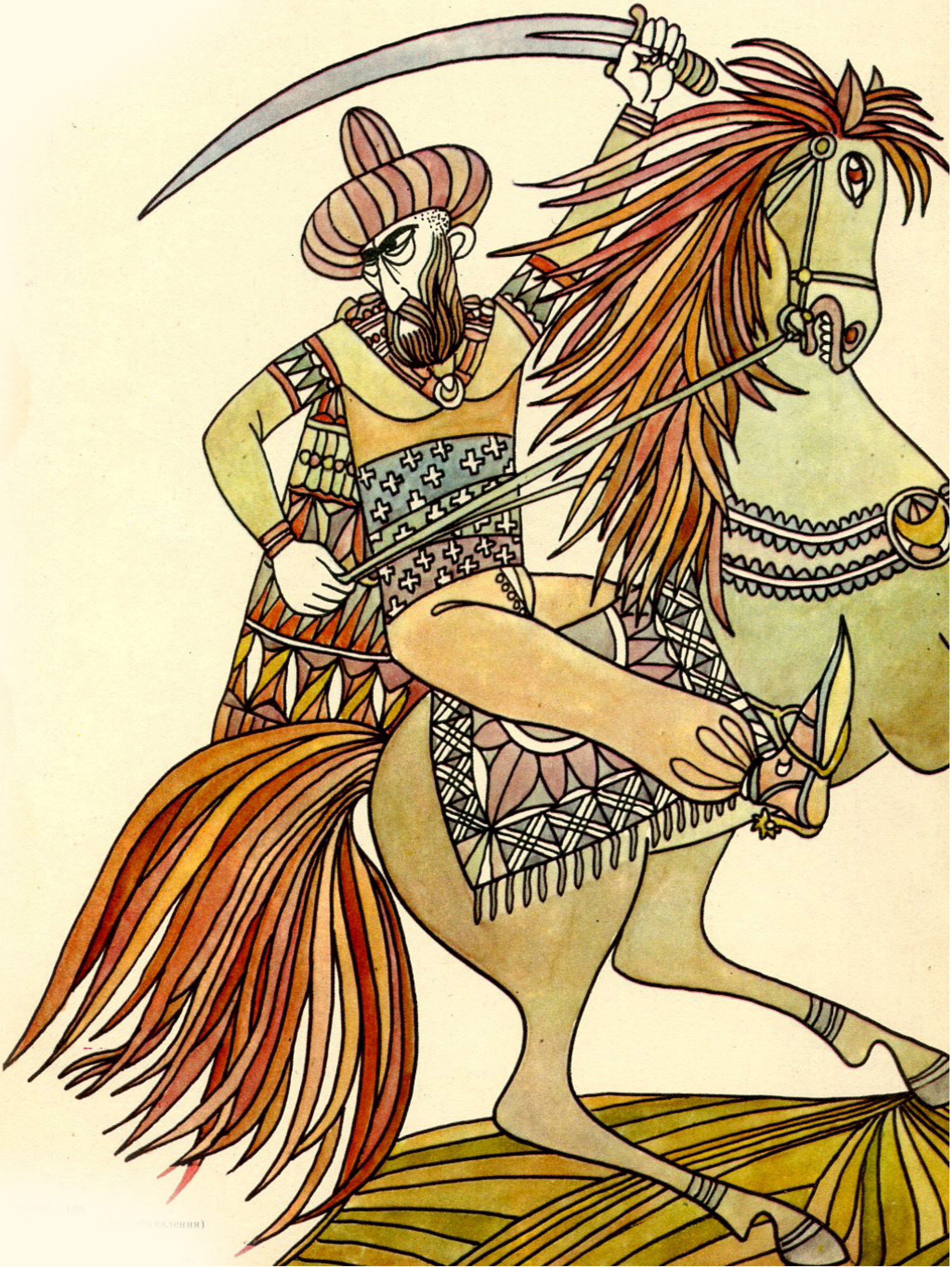
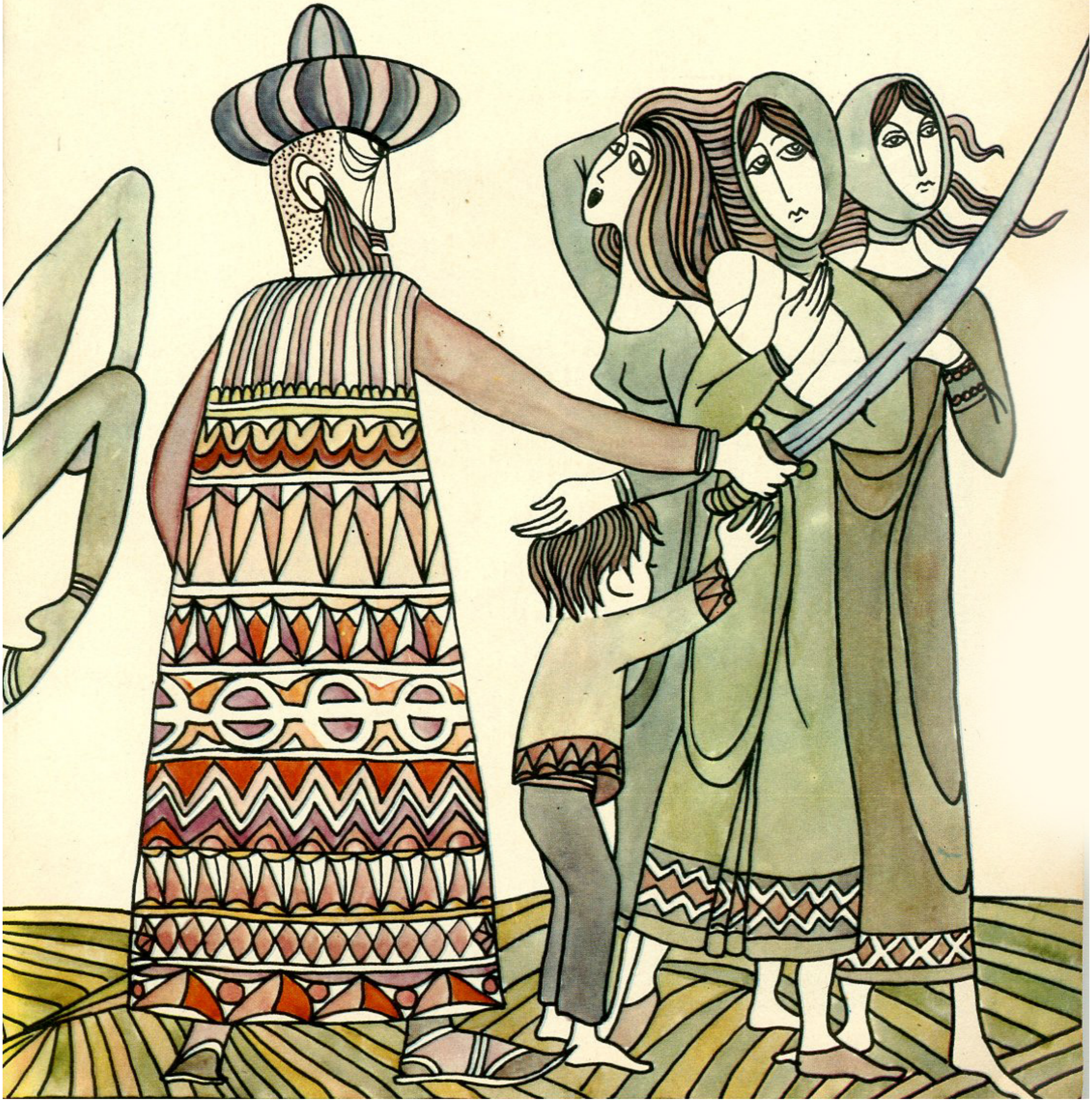
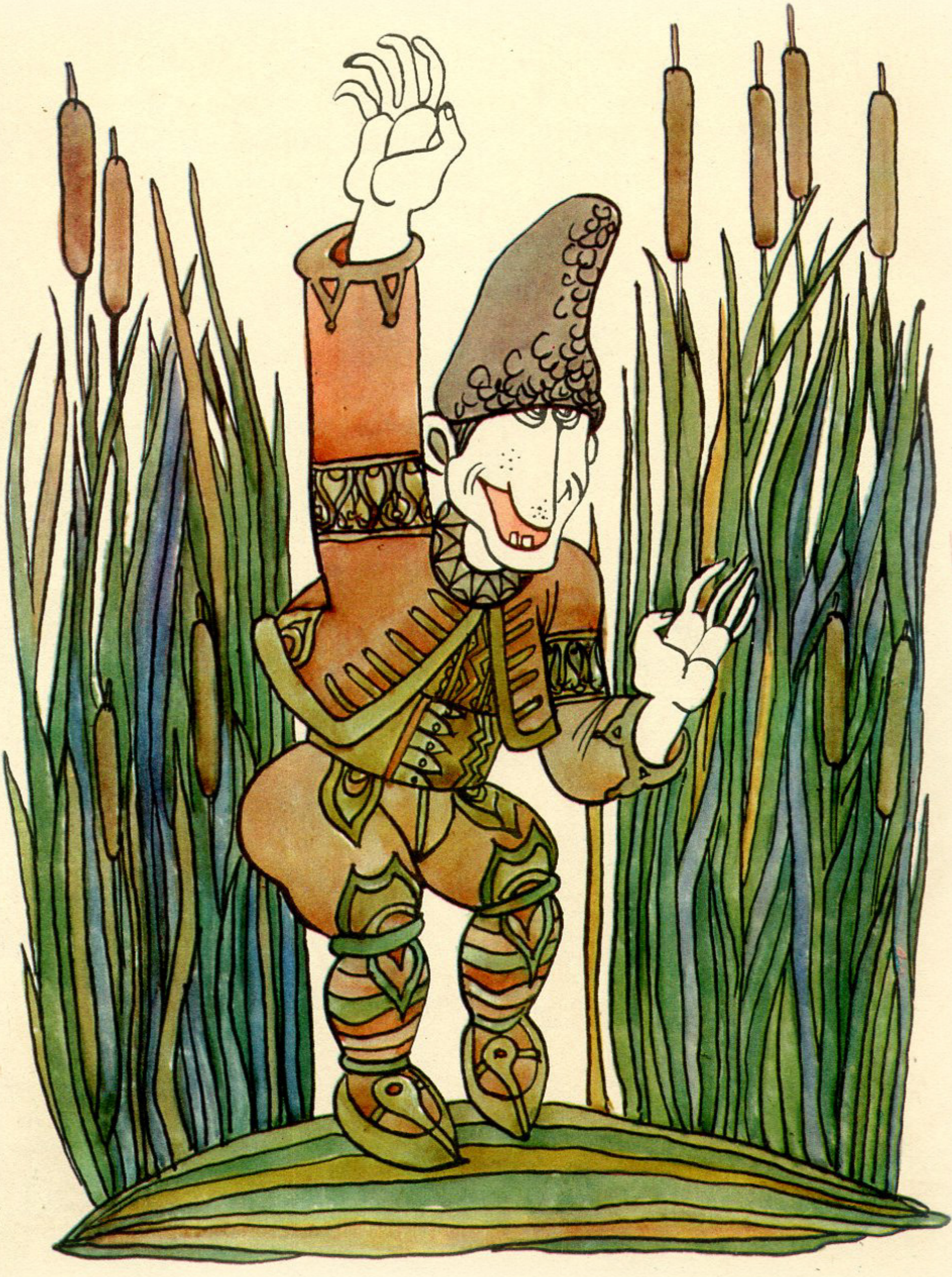


# The Legend of the Lapwing

Long, long ago, when the Turks came to Moldavia and stole girls and children, the lapwing was not a bird but a man. What his name was nobody knew because the names of



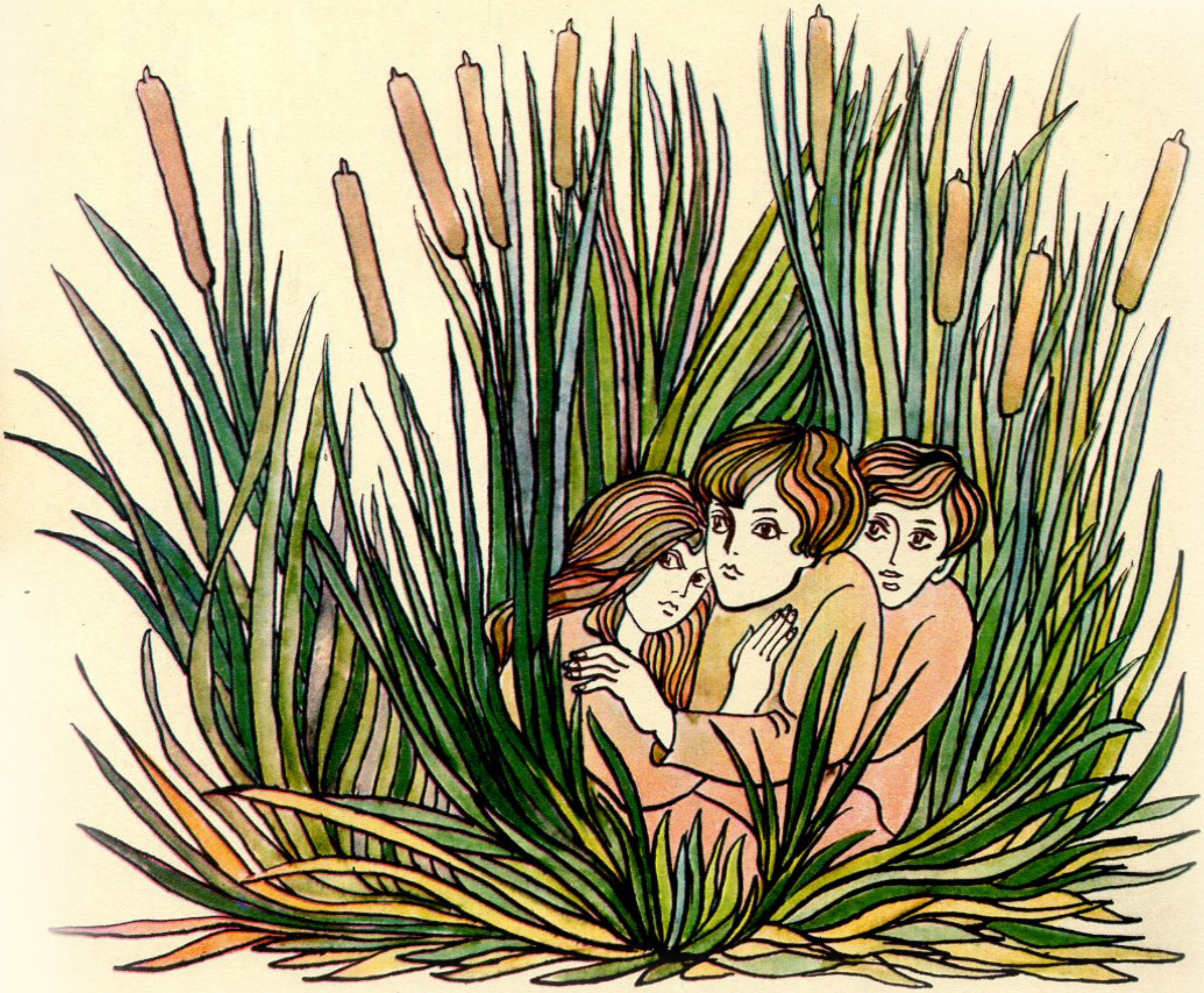


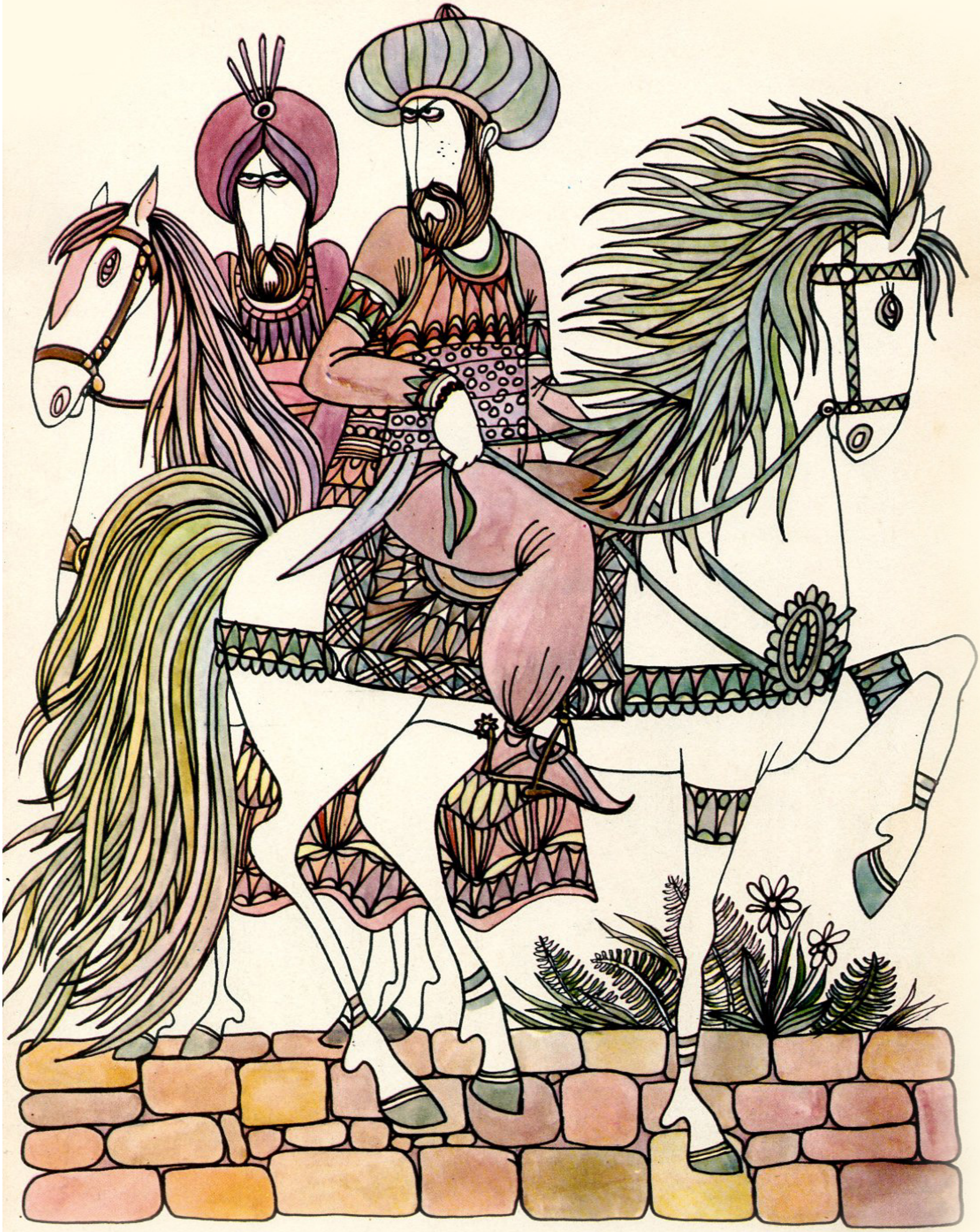
bad men are usually forgotten and only their deeds remain as a curse.

That bad man lived in a hut on the bank of the Danube, and, for the money he got from the Turks, he watched and betrayed those who ran away to avoid trouble.

He walked fierily up and down the bank of the river, rummaging the reeds and rushes and, in the case he found a hidden person, he began to cry:

"Here! Here!"

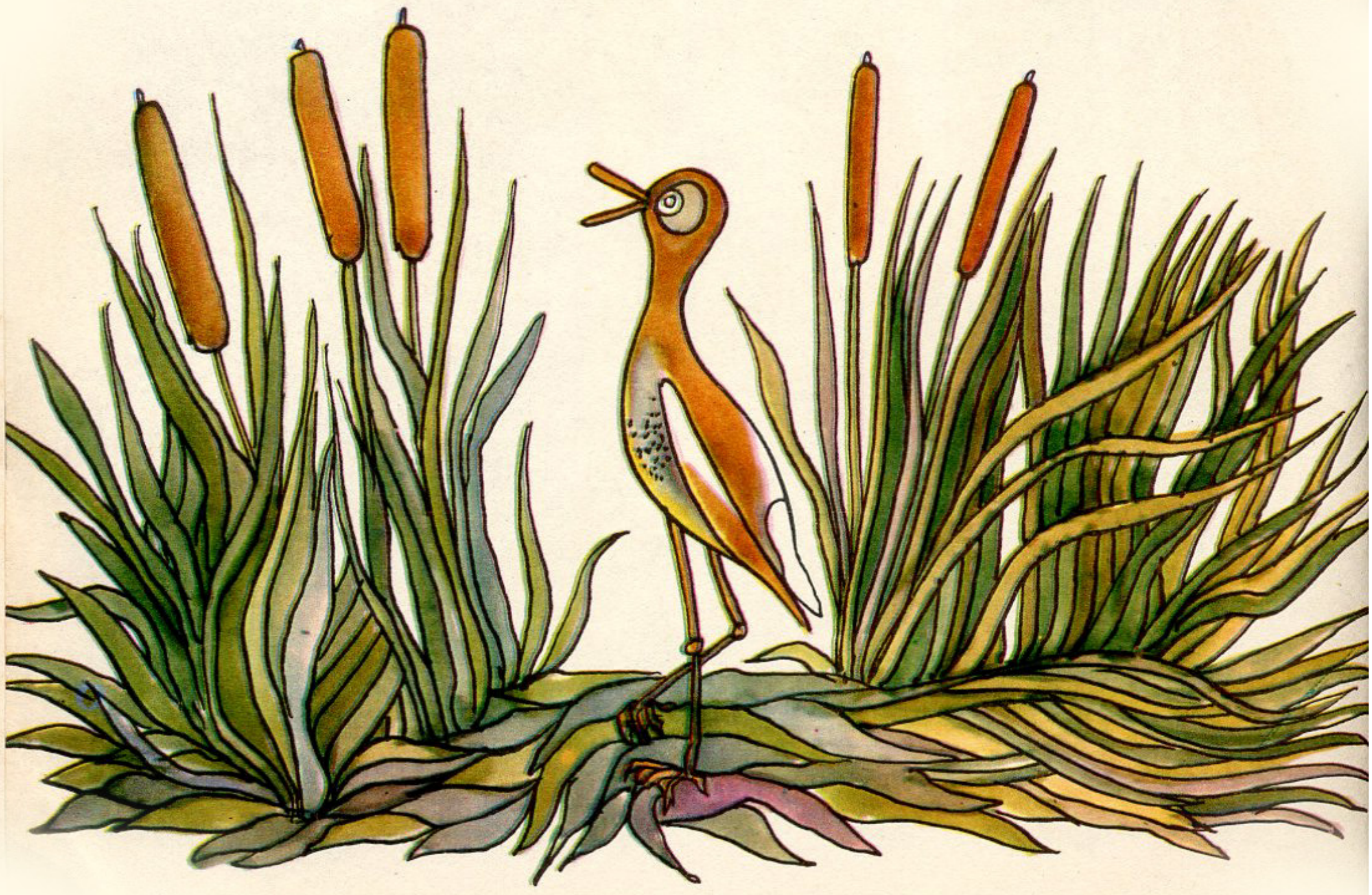




Late in the afternoon he found them in a thicket at last. They were sitting on the ground stuck on together and looking with horror around. The bad man wanted to cry as usual: "Here! Here!" but he could not because his ill deeds were probably too great and the curses of those oppressed too heavy.

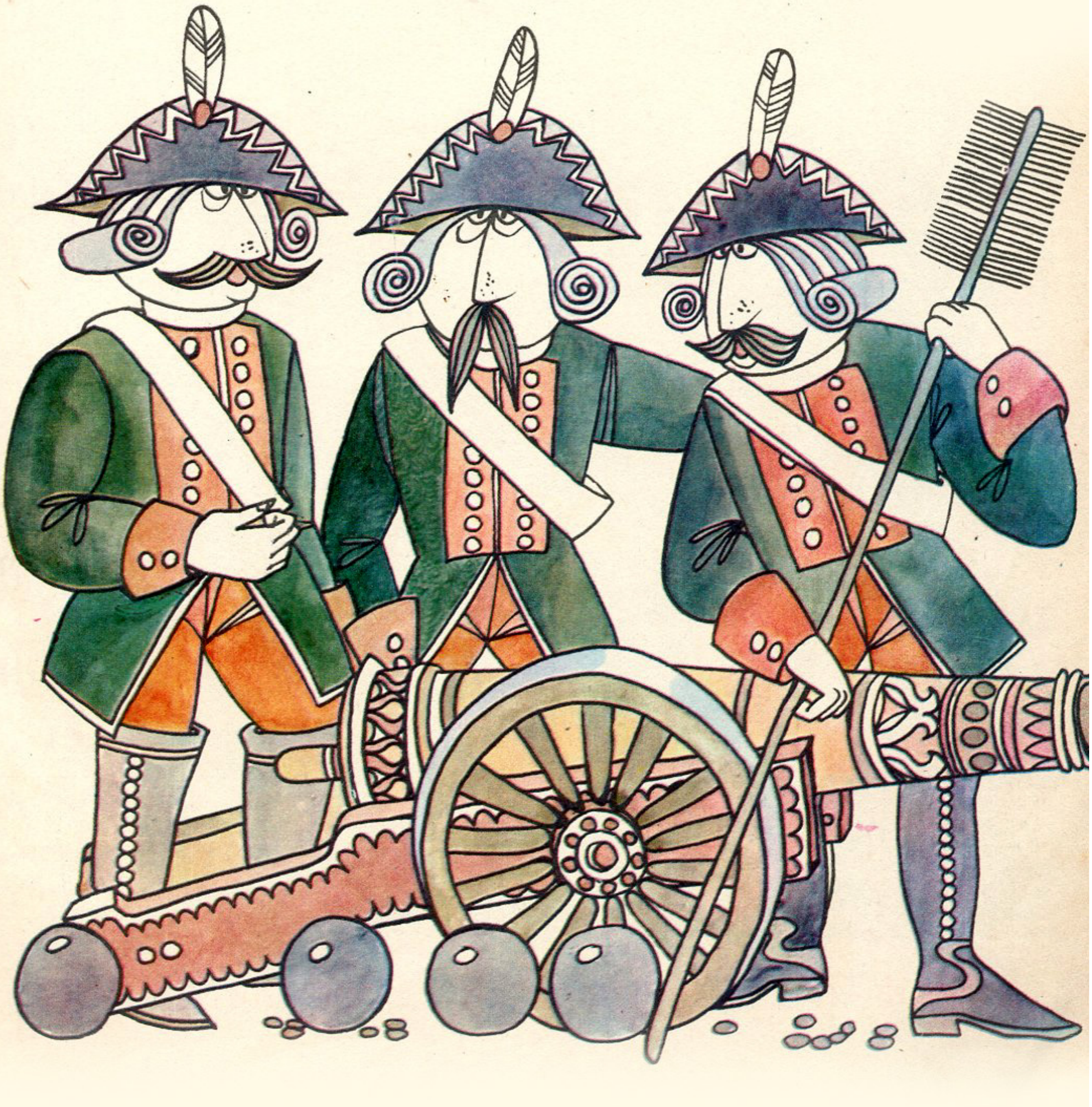
He felt that he began to become smaller and smaller, his legs shortened, his hands turned into wings and he was covered with feathers all over. He rose up in the air and started to fly around over the hidden children. Only a single word remained out of his speech: "Here! Here!"

The Turks did not understand the speech of the bird they had never seen before. Seeing that the bad man did not return they waved their hands in disgust and went away. From that time on the lapwing remained to live near water and, turning round in flight, it cries: "Here! Here!"



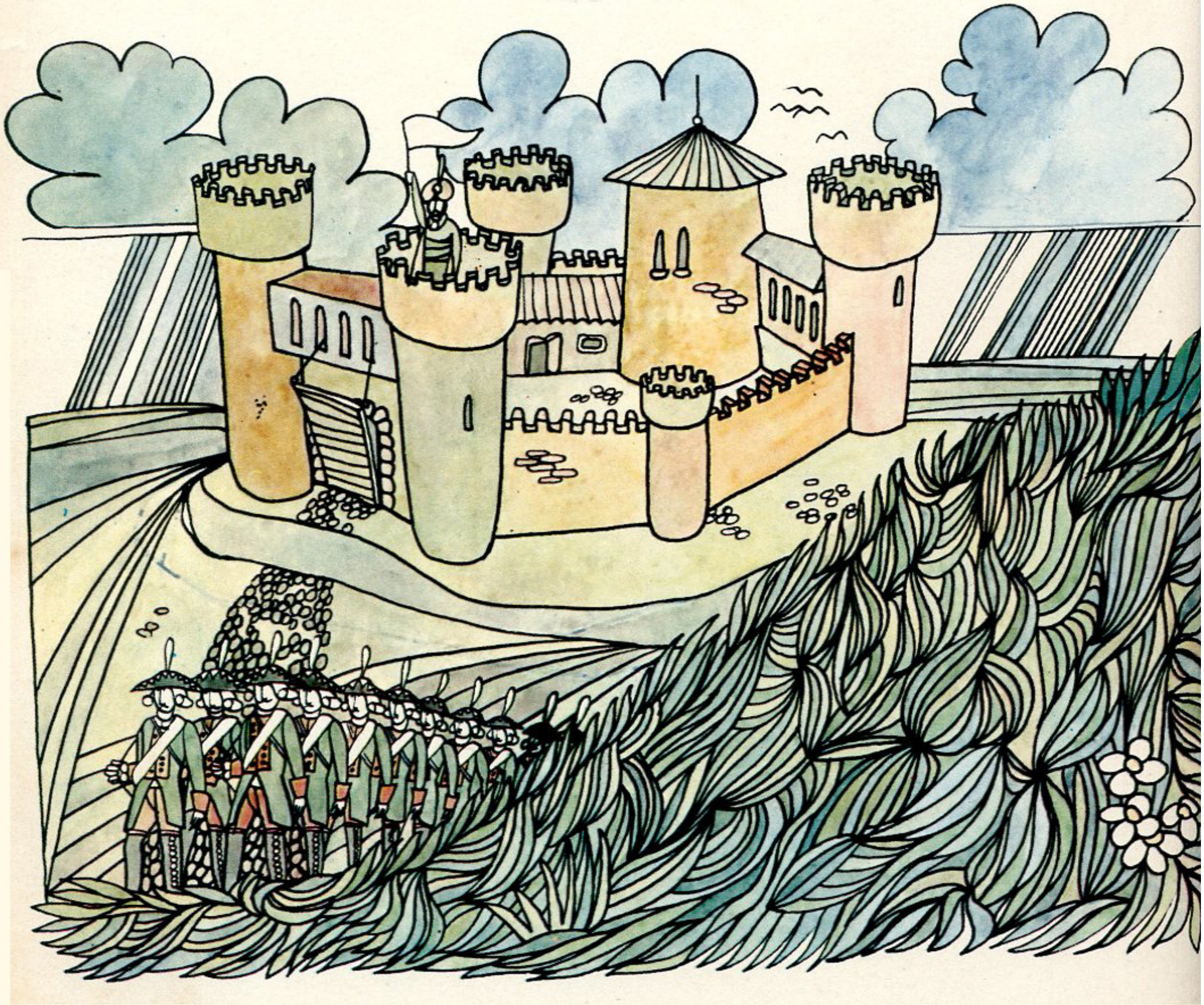
# SUVOROV'S HILL

The Turks fortified, themselves in the fortress. In order to get them out of it a great army was required. When Suvorov came the Turks locked the gates, raised the bridges and began to get ready for fight.

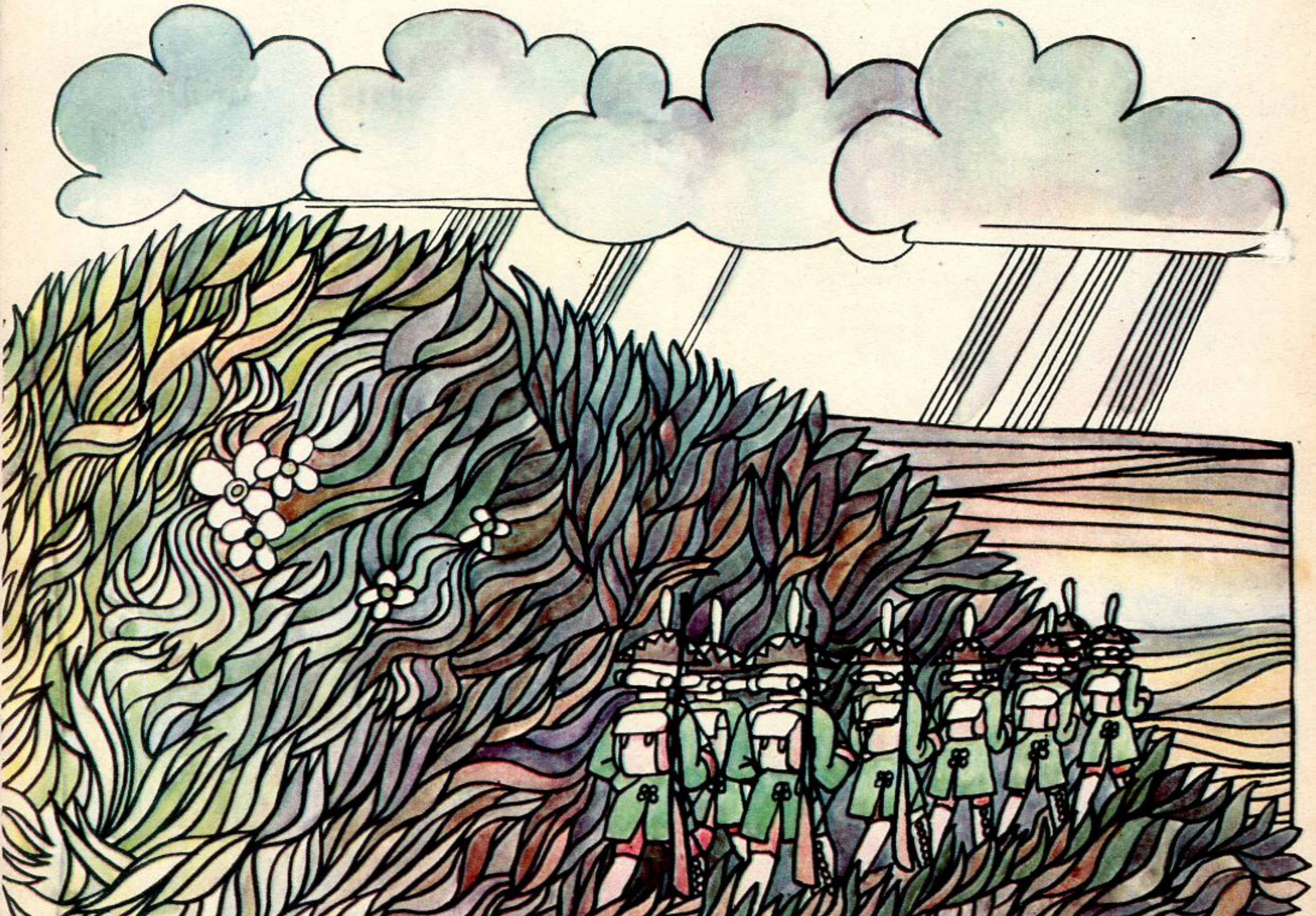


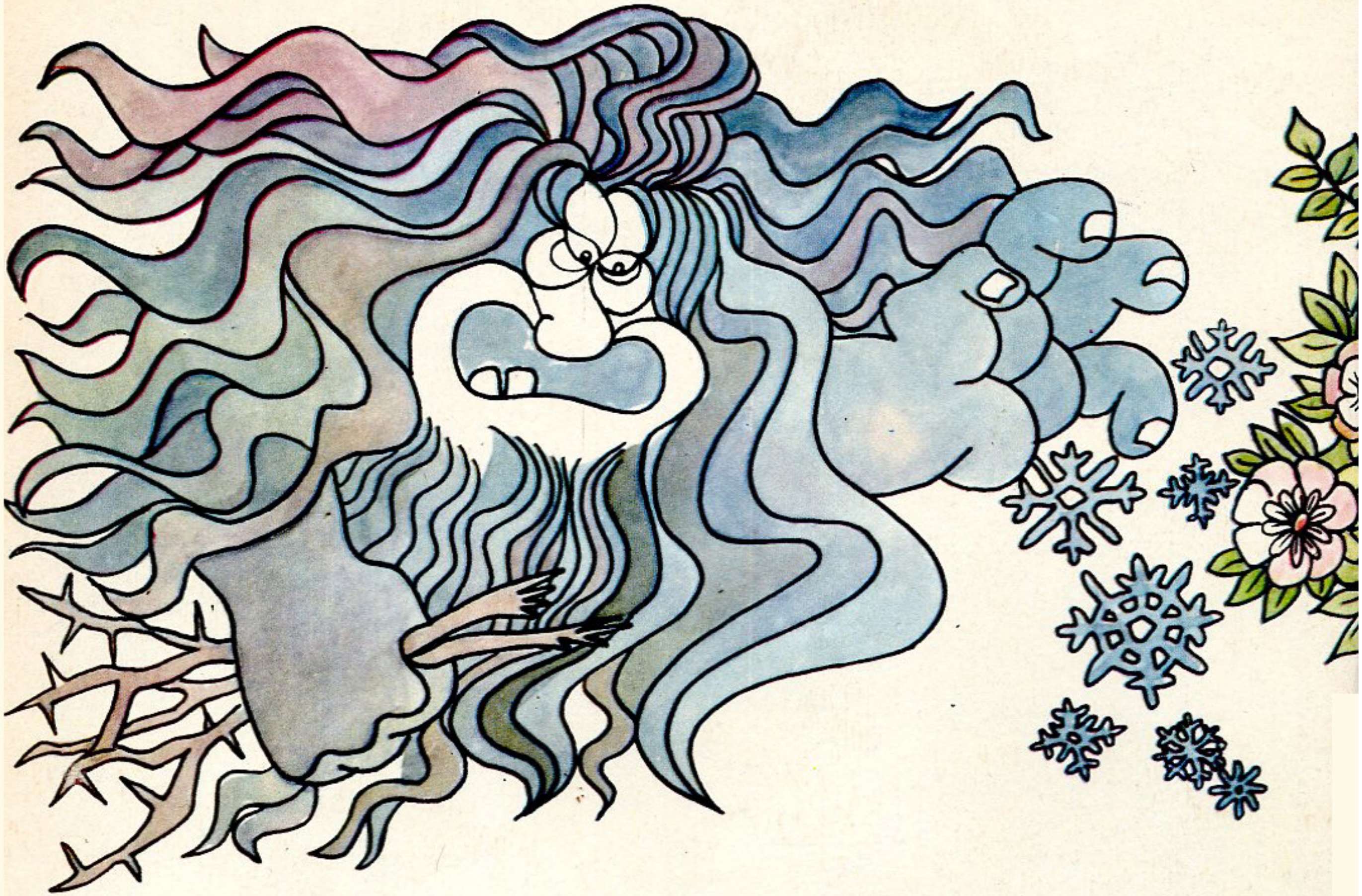
Suvorov stopped with his army outside the fortress at the hill Hagimus and looked what the Turks were doing as from there he could see inside it very well.

He thought and thought how to act to get the Turks out of the fortress without killing his men. He decided to send



some troops to surround the hill. And so they marched around it three days and nights. The Turks looked and thought that new Russian troops were coming and coming all the time. On the third day they got so frightened that they raised a white flag.





## THE LEGEND OF THE MARTSISHOR*

Once upon a time there was a delicate flower with the petals as white as the snow. This flower was the Snow Drop. One day when the sun penetrated with its rays through the great dark clouds, the Snow Drop appeared on the slope of the hill. A good and beautiful fairy, whose name was Spring, saved it from the severe frost. But the cruel North Wind rushed out of its ice and snow palace and tried to kill the courageous flower which had dared to tread on its cold empire.

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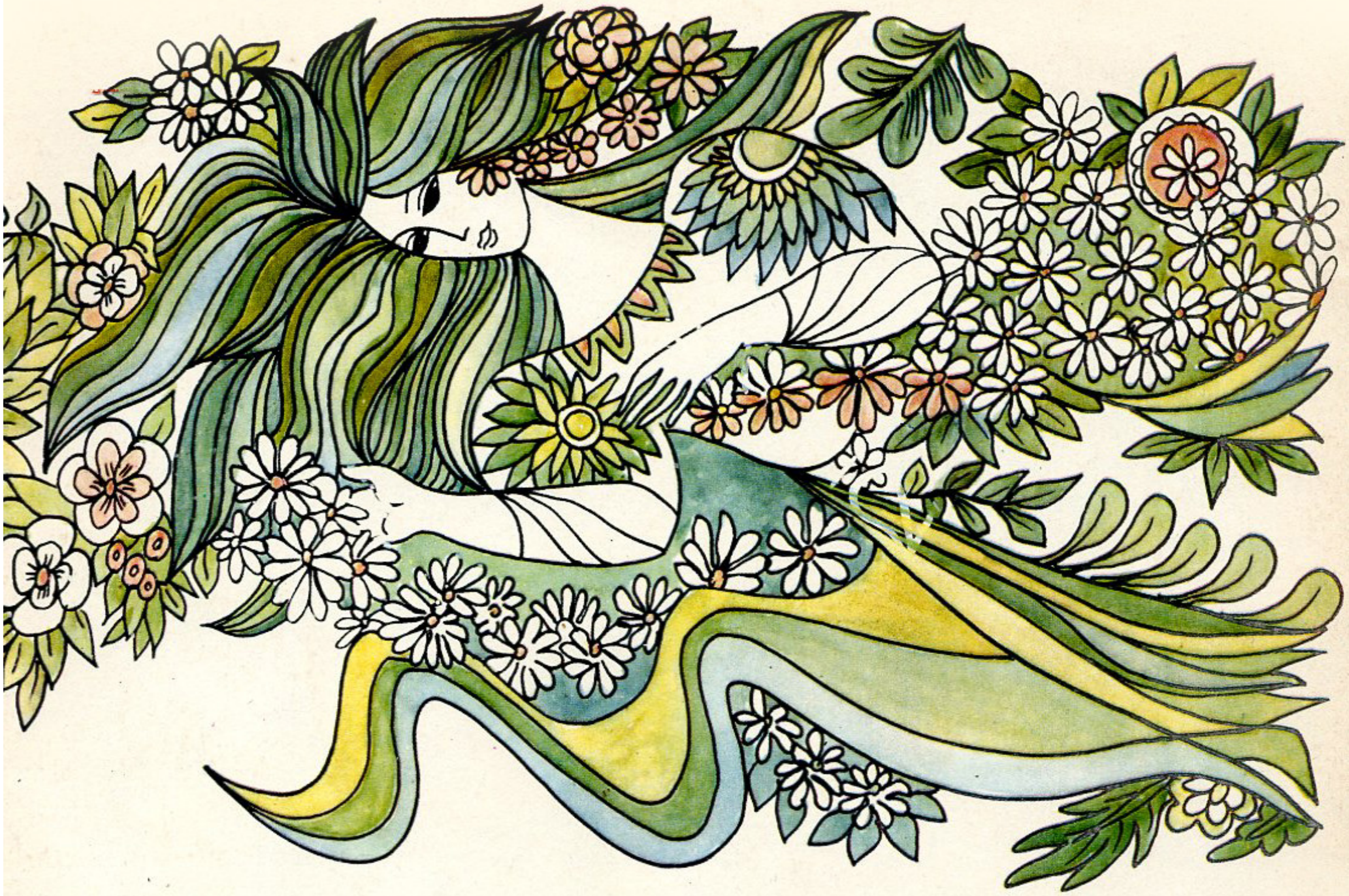
* A trinket made of red and white silk threads and worn by people in Moldavia at the beginning of March as a symbol of youth and happiness.



In its mad running the North Wind uprooted a brumble shrub and threw it furiously at the kind and graceful Spring, pricking her little finger. The red and hot blood of the fairy spouted out and began to drip on the white petals of the Snow Drop.

The hot blood awoke the Snow Drop and brought it back to life. The Snow Drop was so glad that it heaved the head up and his nice voice was heard over hills and valleys at once:

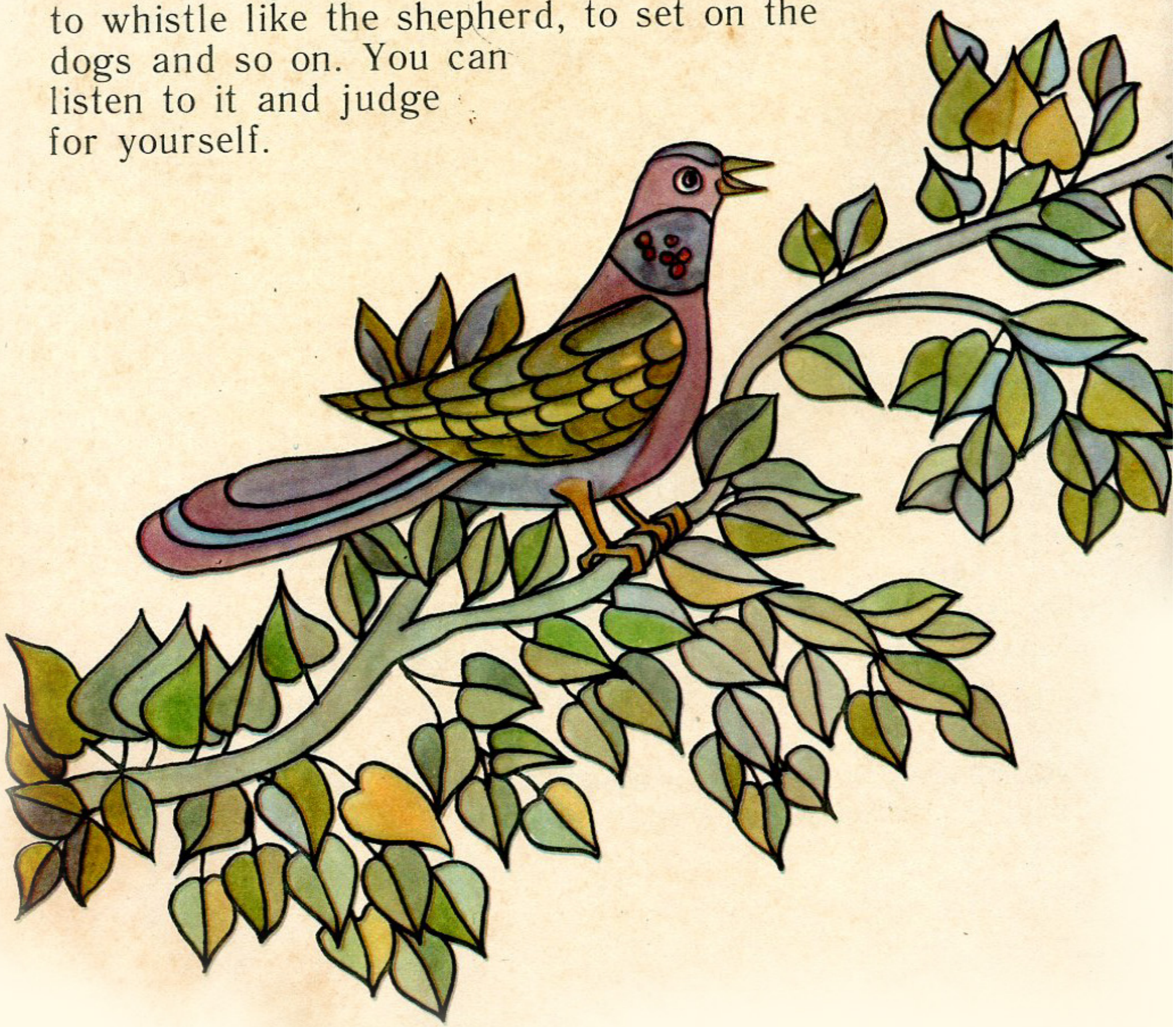
"Be happy, people! The Spring comes with me! The Sun and Life come with me too!"

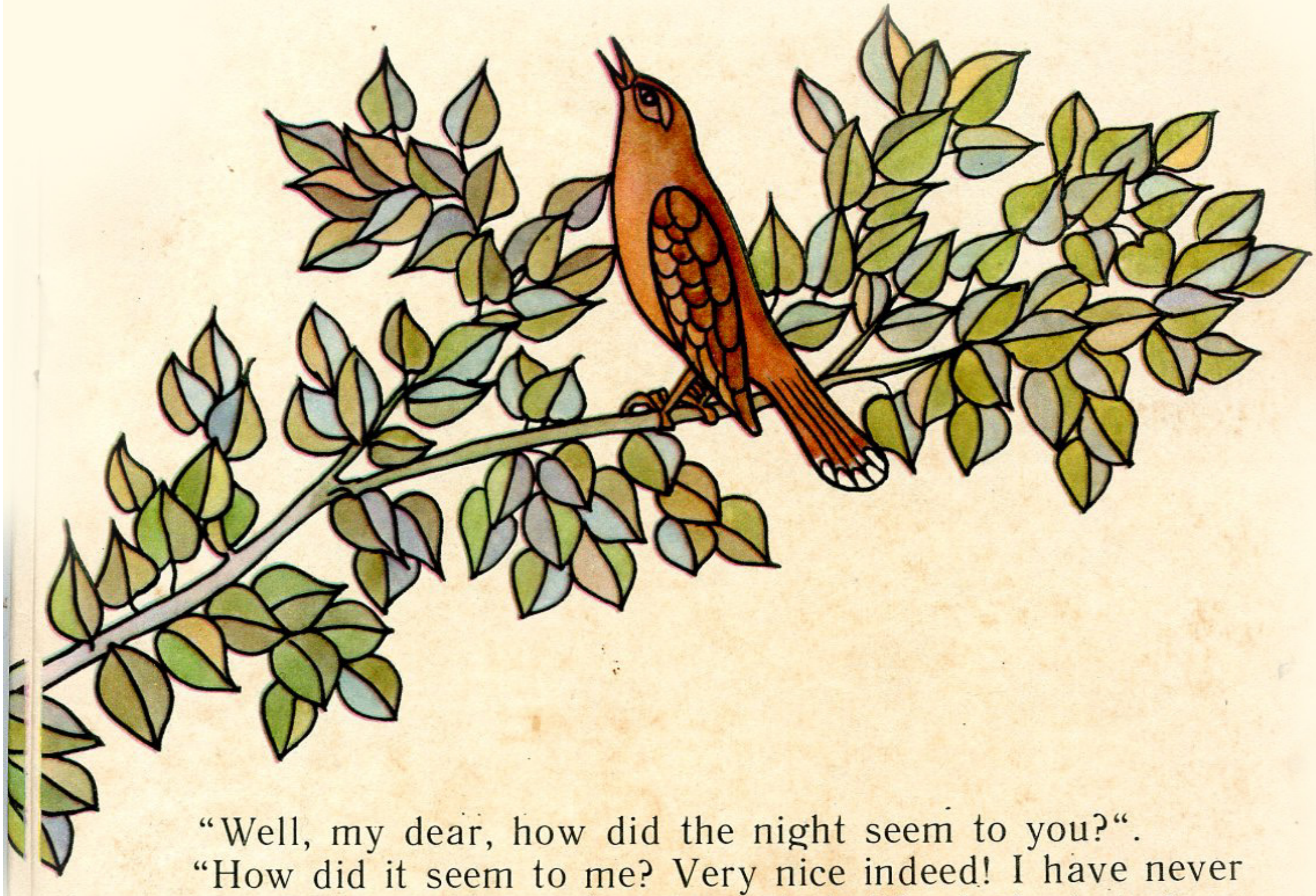
# THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE TURTLE DOVE

They say that long ago the Nightingale laid a bet with the Turtle Dove: to stand awaked a whole summer night and to listen. The one who would learn more songs would be the winner.

As soon as the evening was setting in the Turtle Dove fell asleep and awoke only at dawn, when a man could not catch his horse and cried: "Toorrr!" Hearing that the Turtle was not able to sleep any more and the word it heard was the only one it learned.

The Nightingale stood awaked the whole night through from evening till morning and learnt twelve songs: to whistle like the shepherd, to set on the dogs and so on. You can listen to it and judge for yourself.





"Well, my dear, how did the night seem to you?".

"How did it seem to me? Very nice indeed! I have never seen such a beautiful night in my whole life. And what about you?"

"I liked it too", said the Turtle Dove, "but let us see what we know. Will you start first, please?"

And the Nightingale began to sing so nicely that it was a real pleasure to listen to it. Both the Turtle Dove and the grove around them remained dumbfounded.

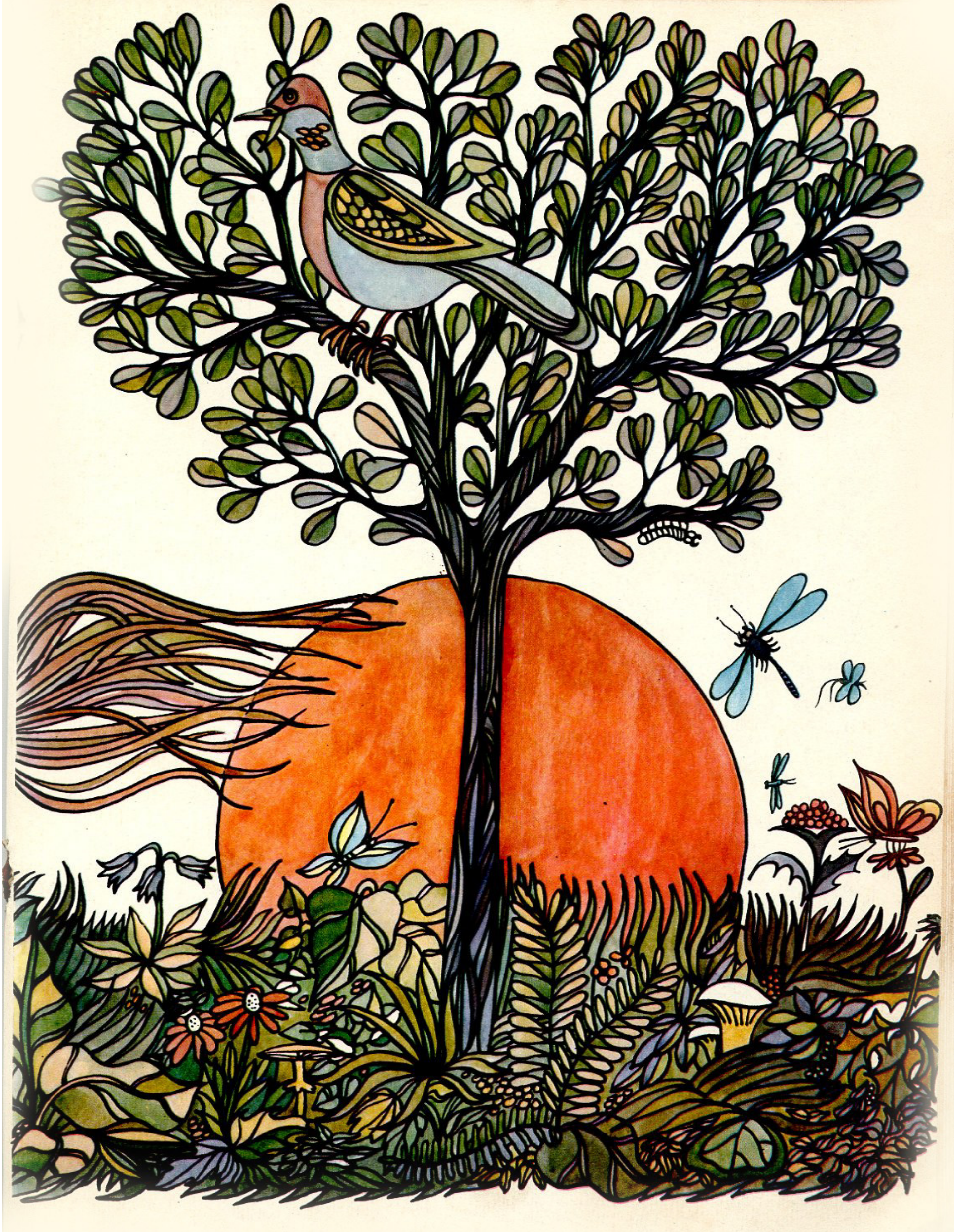
As the Nightingale finished its singing, the Turtle Dove said:

"Oh poor me, my dear, I fell asleep and awoke only when a man cried. He couldn't catch his horse and cried: "Toorrr!" "Toorrr!" And it was all I learned".

The Nightingale was the winner of course. From that time it was the first singer among birds and only because it was awaked a whole night.

It sings each night through while the Turtle Dove goes to sleep and it awakes only in the morning, beginning to sing what it learned: "Toorrr!"

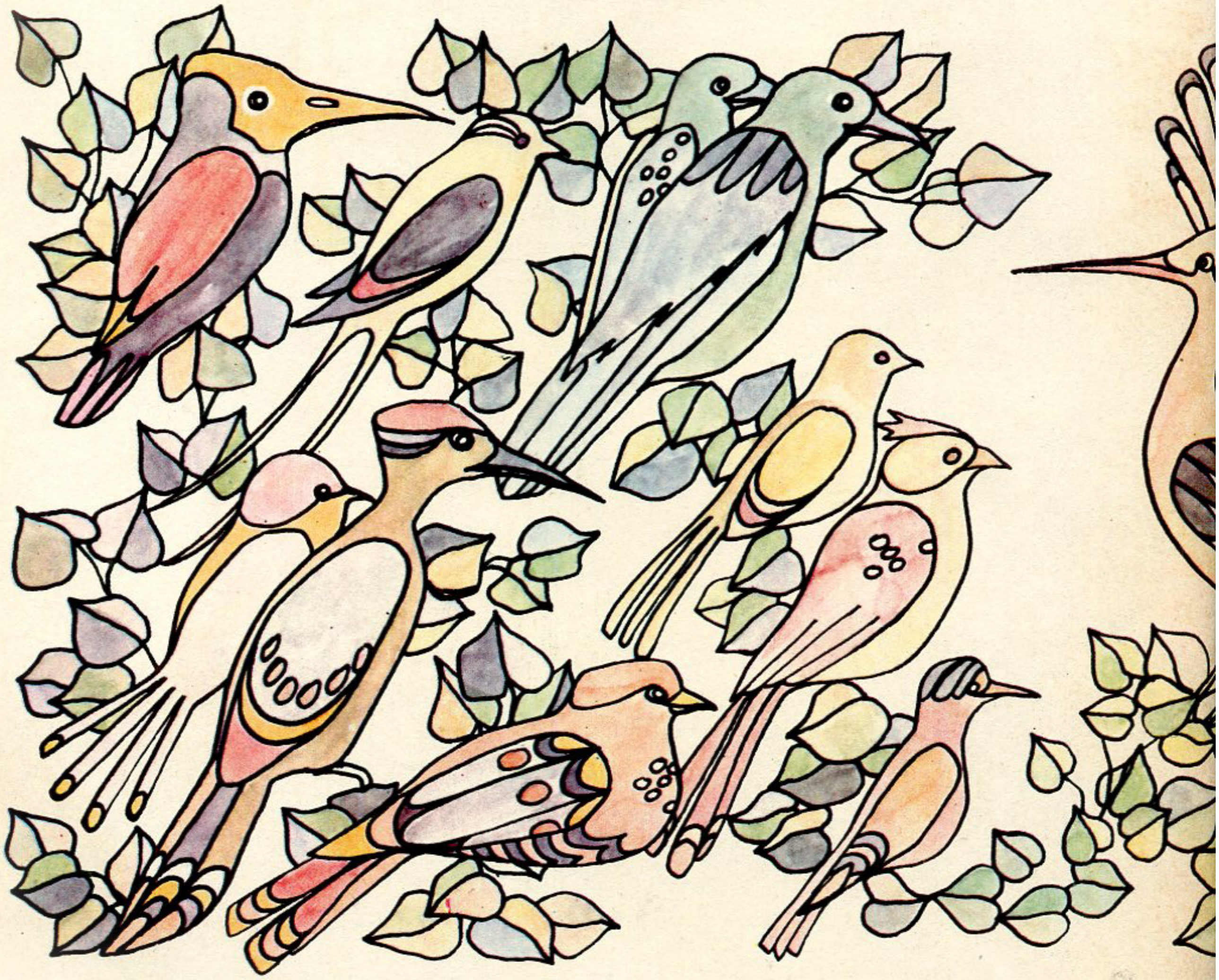
You see, my dear children, that the hardworking one can learn and understand anything with some effort, while the lazybones only mill the wind.



# THE HOOPOE

A long time ago the Hoopoe had not any crest. The beautiful feather crest which is on its head, and which it turns round all sides so proudly now, belonged to the Cuckoo.

When the Lark got married and invited all the birds to its wedding party, the Hoopoe wanted to go but, being not so beautiful as it wished, went to the Cuckoo and asked it to lend its crest. The Hoopoe added that as soon as it

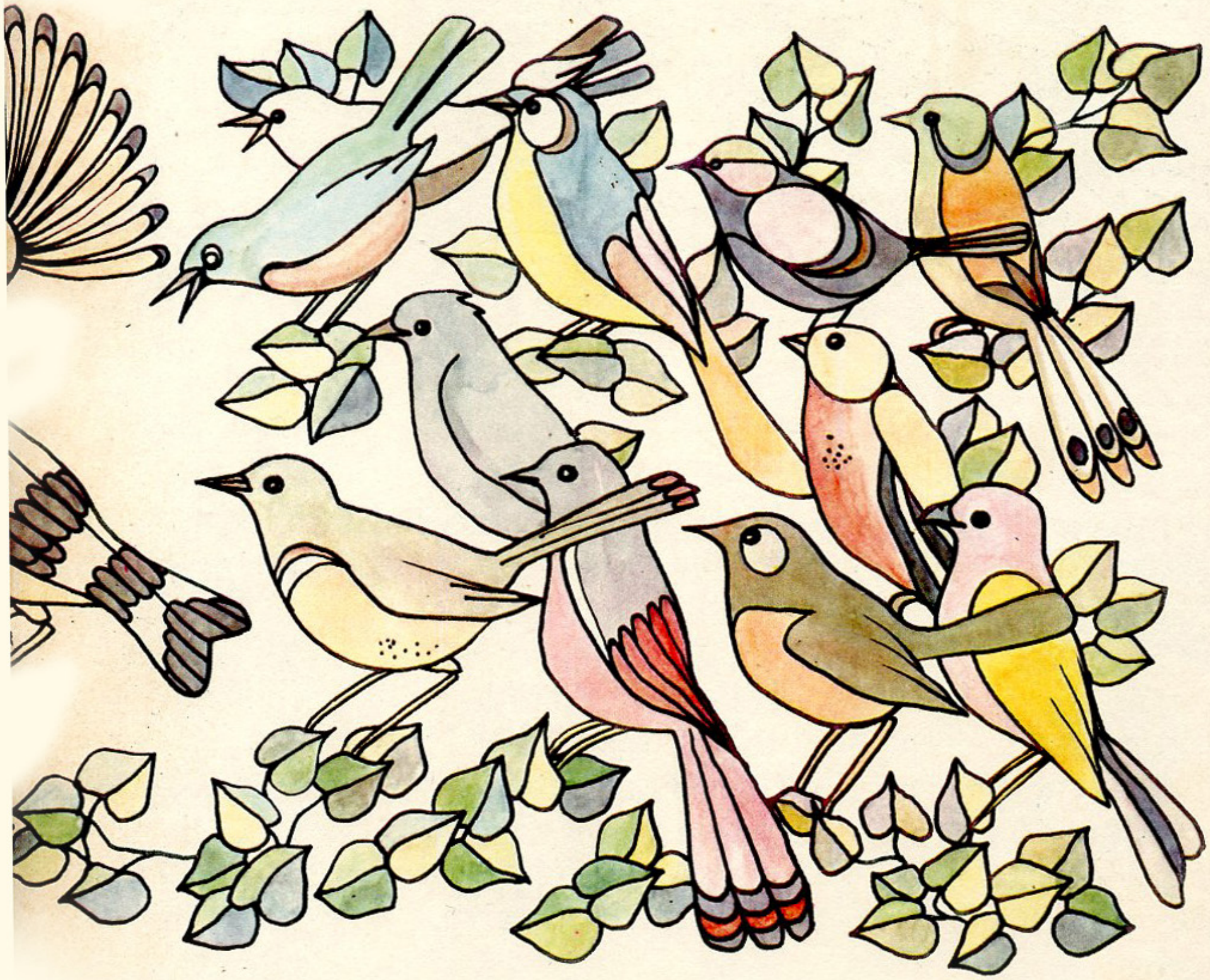


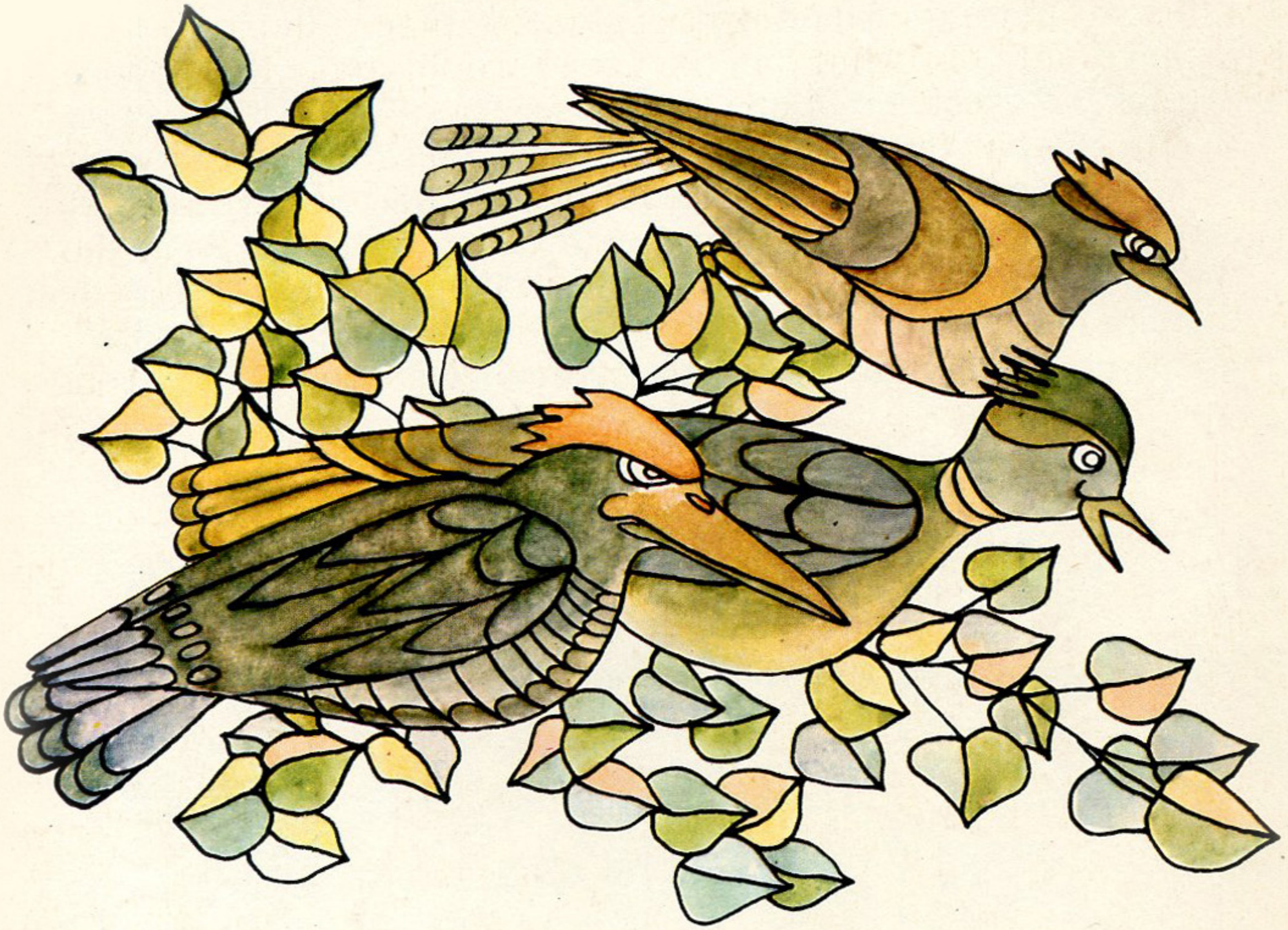
returned from the wedding party would bring the crest back at once.

The Cuckoo, being a kindhearted bird lended the crest to the Hoopoe.

The Hoopoe took the crest, put it on the head and went straight to the wedding party.

All the birds which were present at the wedding party liked the Hoopoe's crest very much as it was really beautiful and began to speak highly of it especially the Lark. The Hoo-





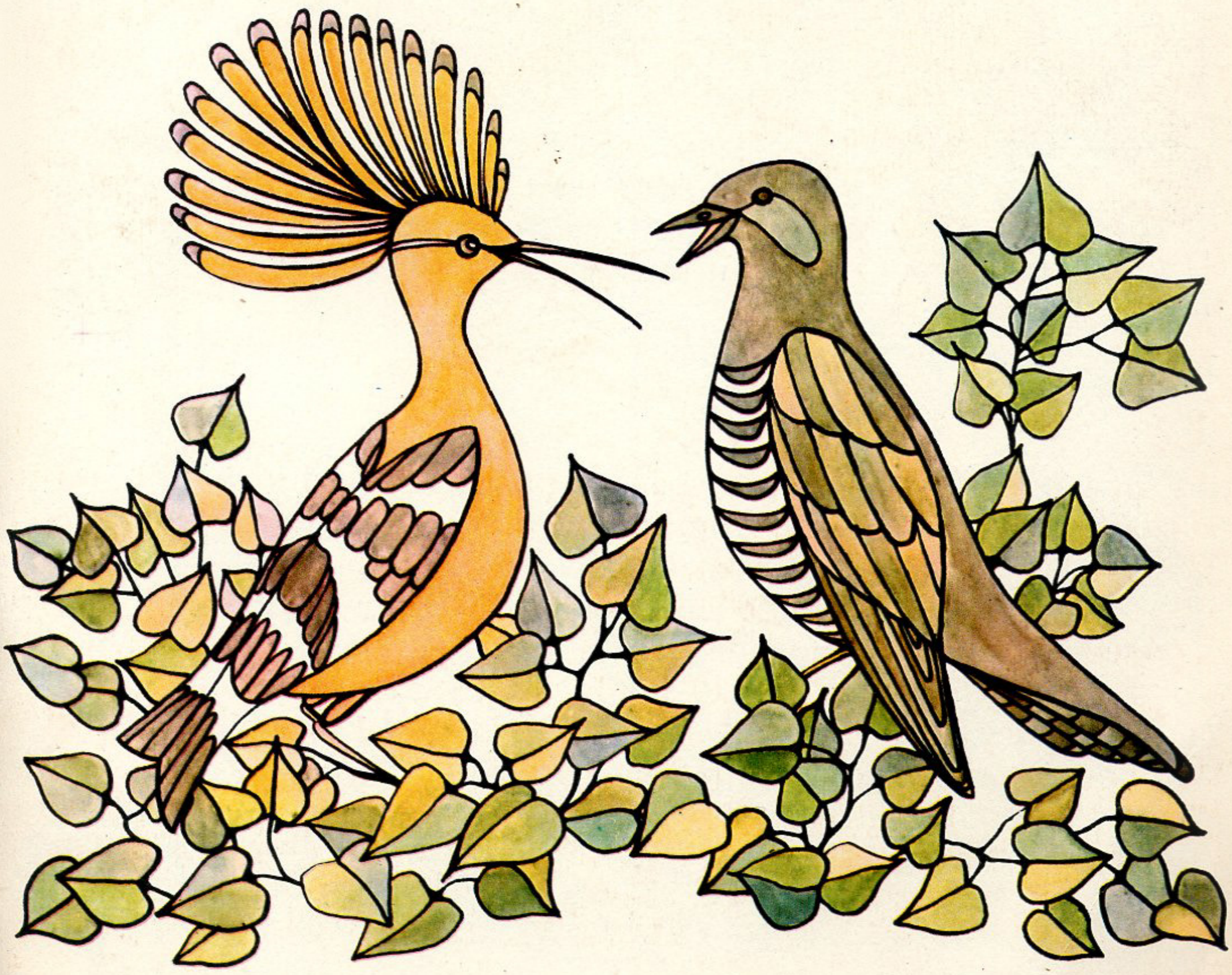
poe, being so highly praised, became proud and arrogant and after returning home from the wedding party didn't go to the Cuckoo to give the crest back but kept it.

The Cuckoo waited and waited for a long time and then seeing that the Hoopoe had broken its word and had not returned the crest flew to ask for it. The Hoopoe did not want to return the crest but pretended to know nothing as if it had never borrowed anything from the Cuckoo.

When the Cuckoo saw that the Hoopoe did not want to give the crest back of its own free will, got very angry and called all the singing birds together to one place, thinking that if they found out what had happened would make the Hoopoe return the crest.

As soon as the singing birds heard about it, they gathered at once to put heads together. But they elected the Lark as their leader who had to decide the case. The Lark liked the way the Hoopoe had been beautified with the crest at its wedding party and rendered justice to it but not to the Cuckoo.

That's how the Hoopoe remained victorious and from that time it wears the Cuckoo's crest.



# THE PEACOCK AND THE PEAHEN

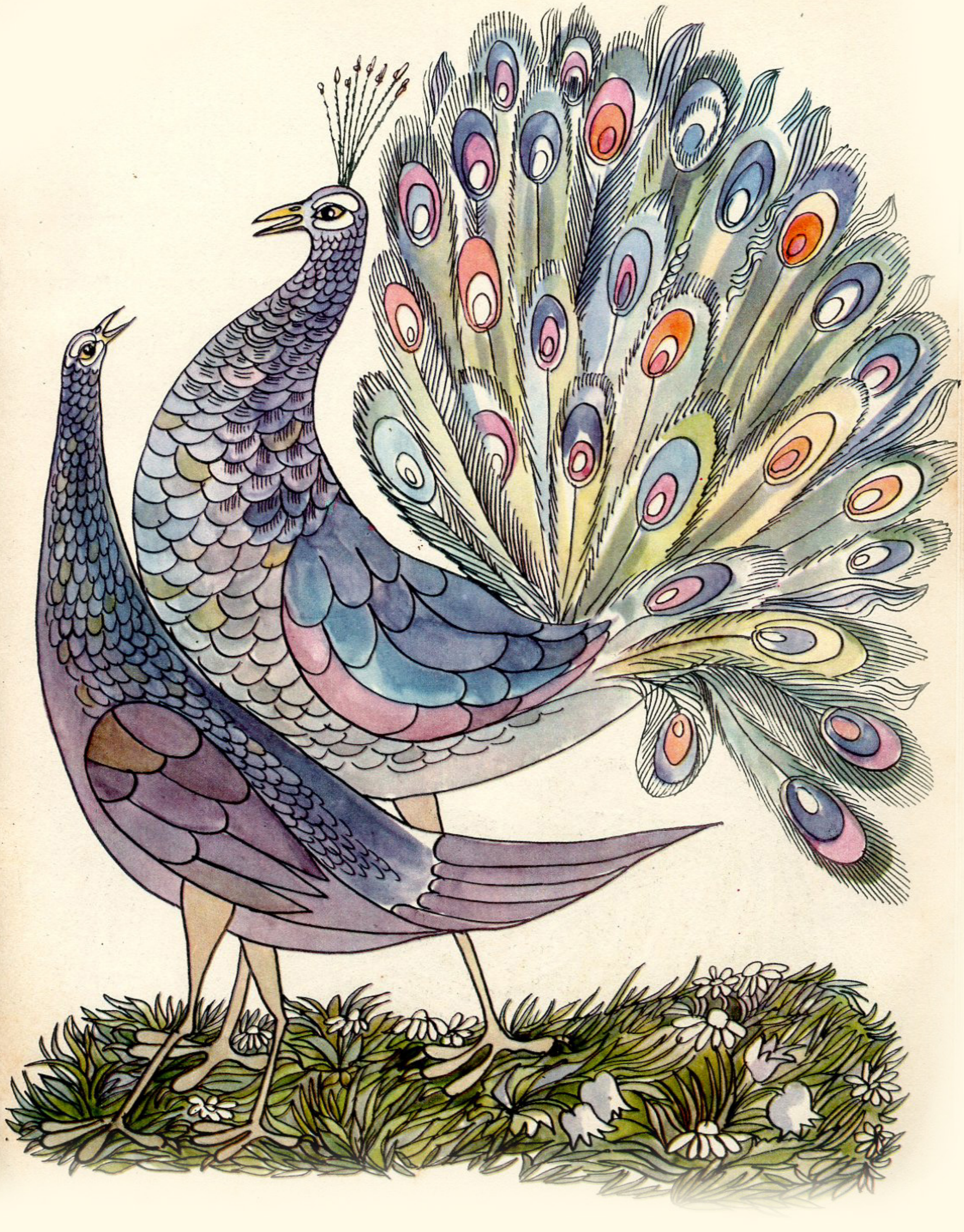
When the peacock got married he prepared for the festivity from morning till midday smartening himself so nicely as it was proper only to a bridegroom.

The Peahen, knowing that everything she needed for the wedding party was ready, did not beautify herself. She said that there was more than enough time till noon.

Just at noon the Peacock came with his people to take her from her parents to his house. But when they arrived she was not dressed up yet.

When the Peahen saw that the bridegroom had come so early, asked him to wait a little untill she beautified herself, saying she was not ready yet. The Peacock answered that he would take her as she was because he loved her dearly. And he really took her without waiting for her to beautify.

From that time the Peahen has no so fine feathers as her husband has as she did not beautify herself in time.



# BUZHOR*

Once upon a time there was a chap whose name was Buzhor. He was as handsome as the sun and as shy as a maid.

One day his father sent him to the forest to mow some hay. He mowed the whole day and in the evening, being tired, decided to sleep in a clearing. He put some armfuls of hay on the ground and fell fast asleep as he had worked hard all the day long.

He awoke late after midnight, enchanted by a very attractive music, which was heard from somewhere nearby. When Buzhor opened his eyes he saw a lot of extremely beautiful girls dancing around him, dressed in transparent veils. They

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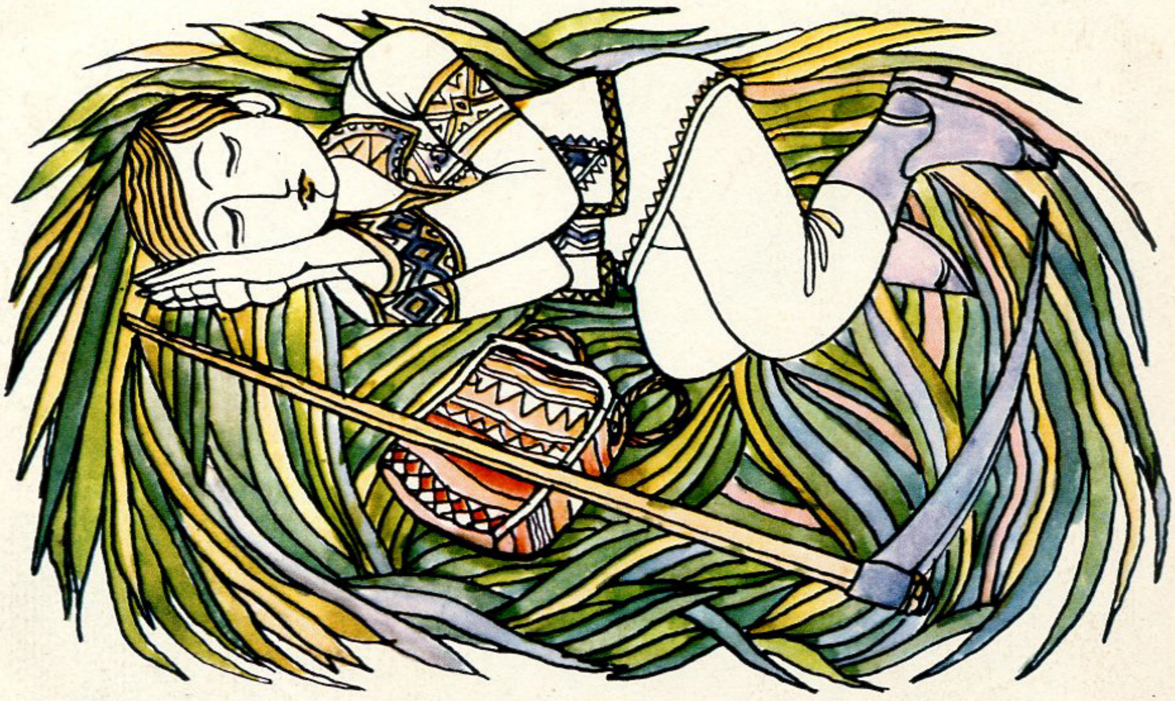
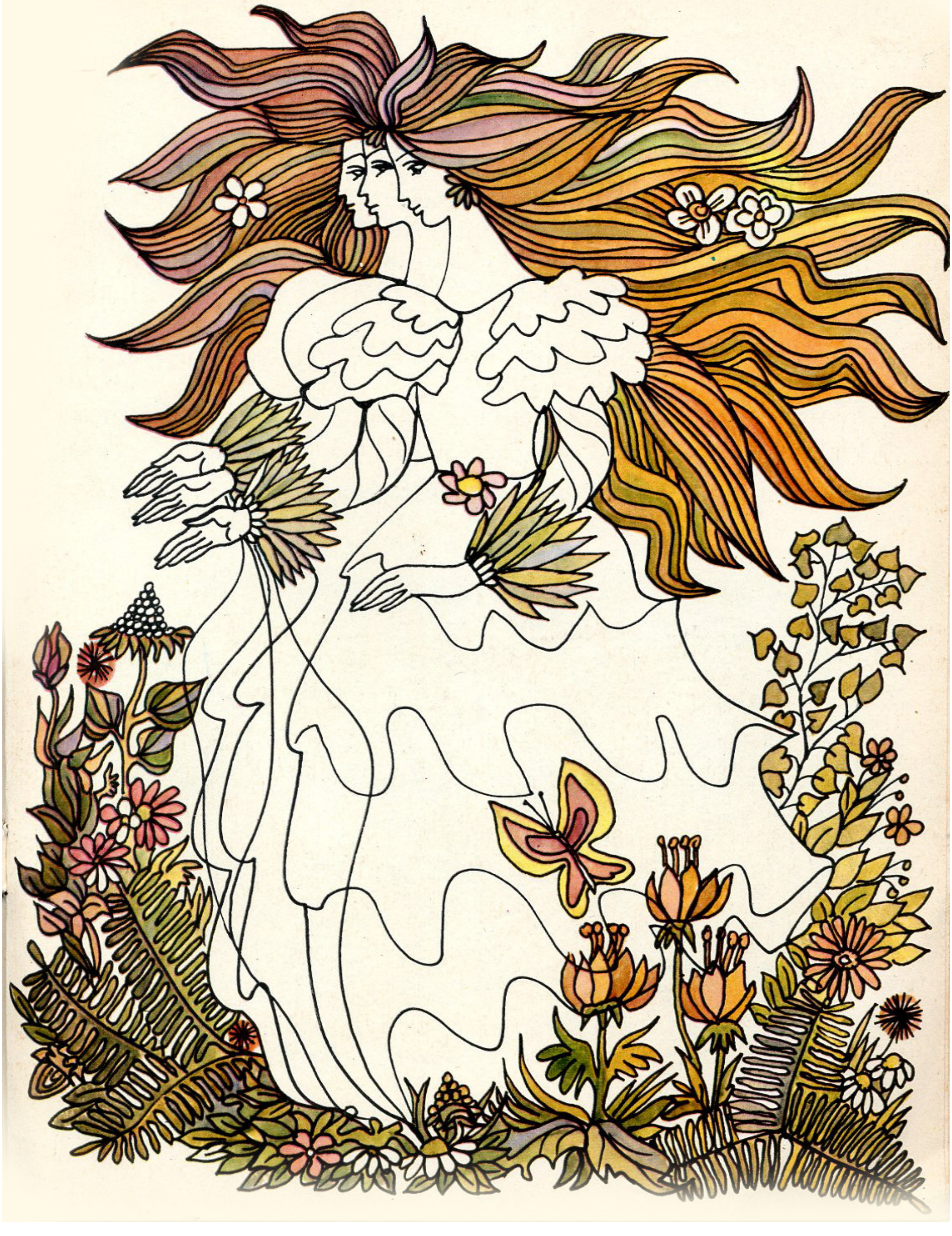
* In English translation it means the flower peony.

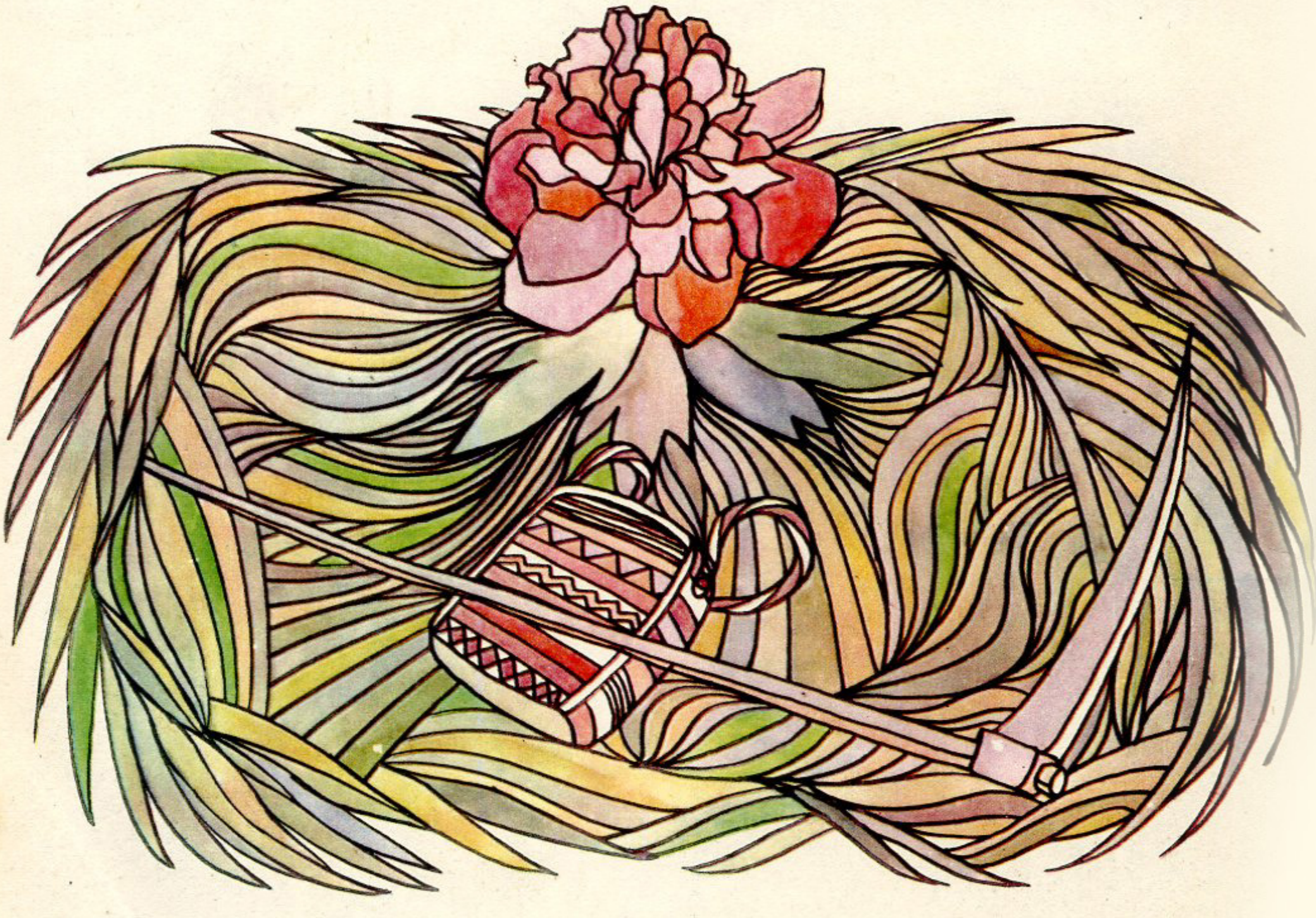




were the fairies of the forest who had come to dance in the bewitched clearing, where the chap was sleeping.

Each of them made signs to Buzhor to come and dance with her. But he was so shy that he could not move and was lying dumbfounded there, becoming very red. The fairies waited in vain. All of a sudden the roosters of the village sang, the fairies disappeared, the music stopped and in the middle of the clearing, where the chap had slept, a beautiful flower sprouted. It was as red as the blood and the people called it Peony after the name of the chap.

That was how the fairies of the forest revenged themselves on the chap as he had chosen none of them to dance with.



# THE SONG OF THE CRESTED LARK

Once upon a time there lived an emperor who had only one son. And it happened so that the young heir fell ill. The emperor called many doctors to find what the matter was with him and to appoint a remedy. A lot of famous doctors came at the emperor's order, but they could not find the remedy. The emperor set a rumour afloat that the one who would find a remedy for his ill son would receive expensive gifts and a great wealth.

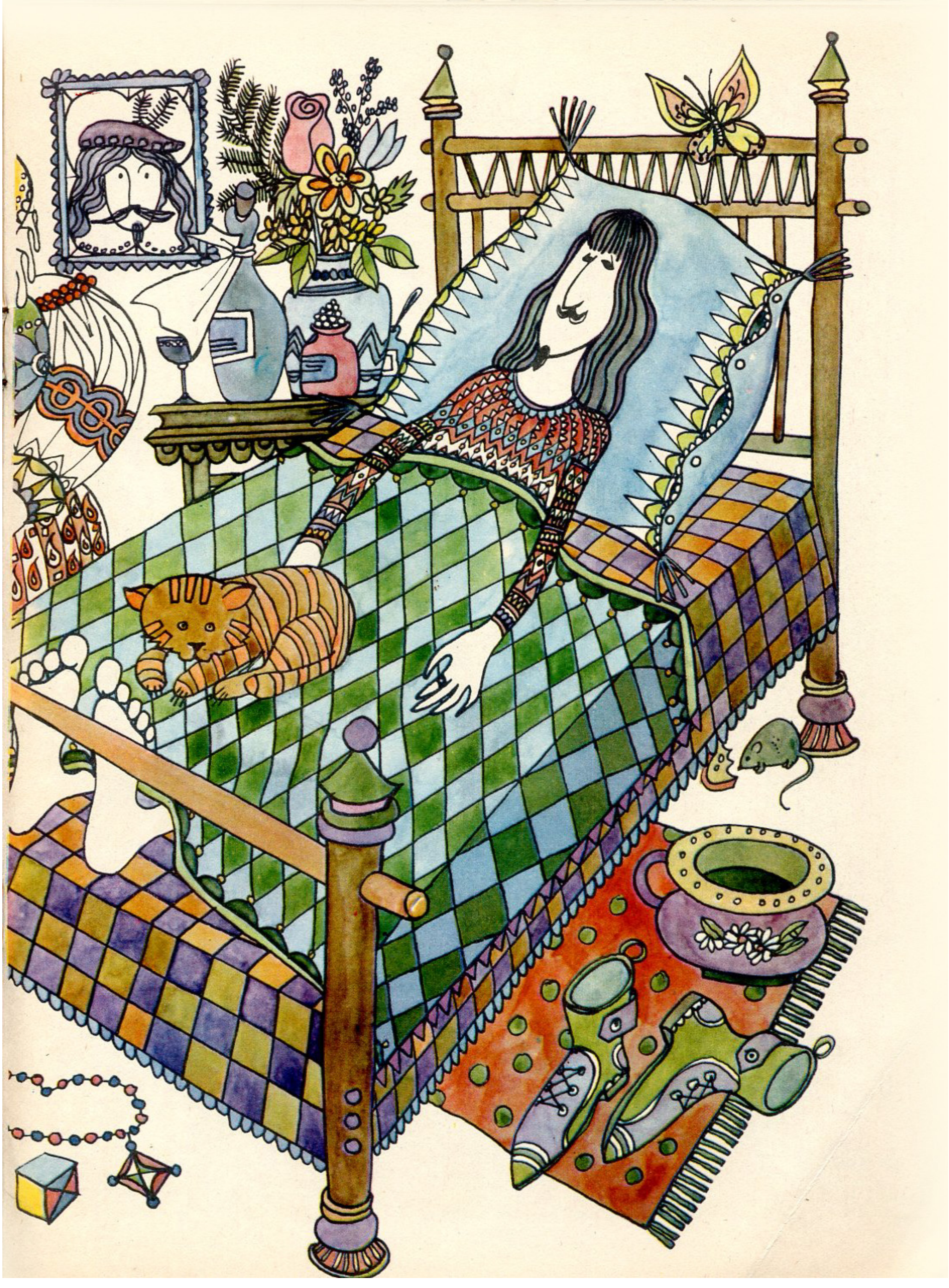
Shortly after that a magician came to the emperor's court from somewhere and said that the prince would cure if he ate tongue of bird-nonbird, hunted by a man-nonman with a gun-nongun, made of wood-nonwood.

Then the emperor called all his lords to have a council at which they had to decide who that man-nonman was what bird-nonbird he had to hunt and where to find that wood-nonwood from which the gun-nongun was to be made.

The counsellors of the emperor talked and discussed the question for a long time untill they came to a unanimous agreement that the bird-nonbird was the crested lark as it walks more on the ground than flies and when it sings it rises high up in the sky from where it falls quickly as a stone. It is not as the rest of the birds. Man-nonman they said is the shepherd as he does not live with other people in the village, but with his flock in the fields. As for wood-nonwood they thought and thought and came to the conclusion that it was the lime-tree wood.

"This wood", they said, "is soft and fragile, but not hard as the wood of other trees, while the gun-nongun is the bow".

So they made a bow of lime-tree wood and bark, gave it to a shepherd and said to him:



"Go and hunt a crested lark to cut its tongue to give to the prince so that he would get well".

The shepherd went to hunt a crested lark with the lime-tree wood bow.

At last he saw a crested lark in the field but it either flew up in the sky or fell down to the ground. The hunter did his best to come nearer and aim at it but he couldn't.

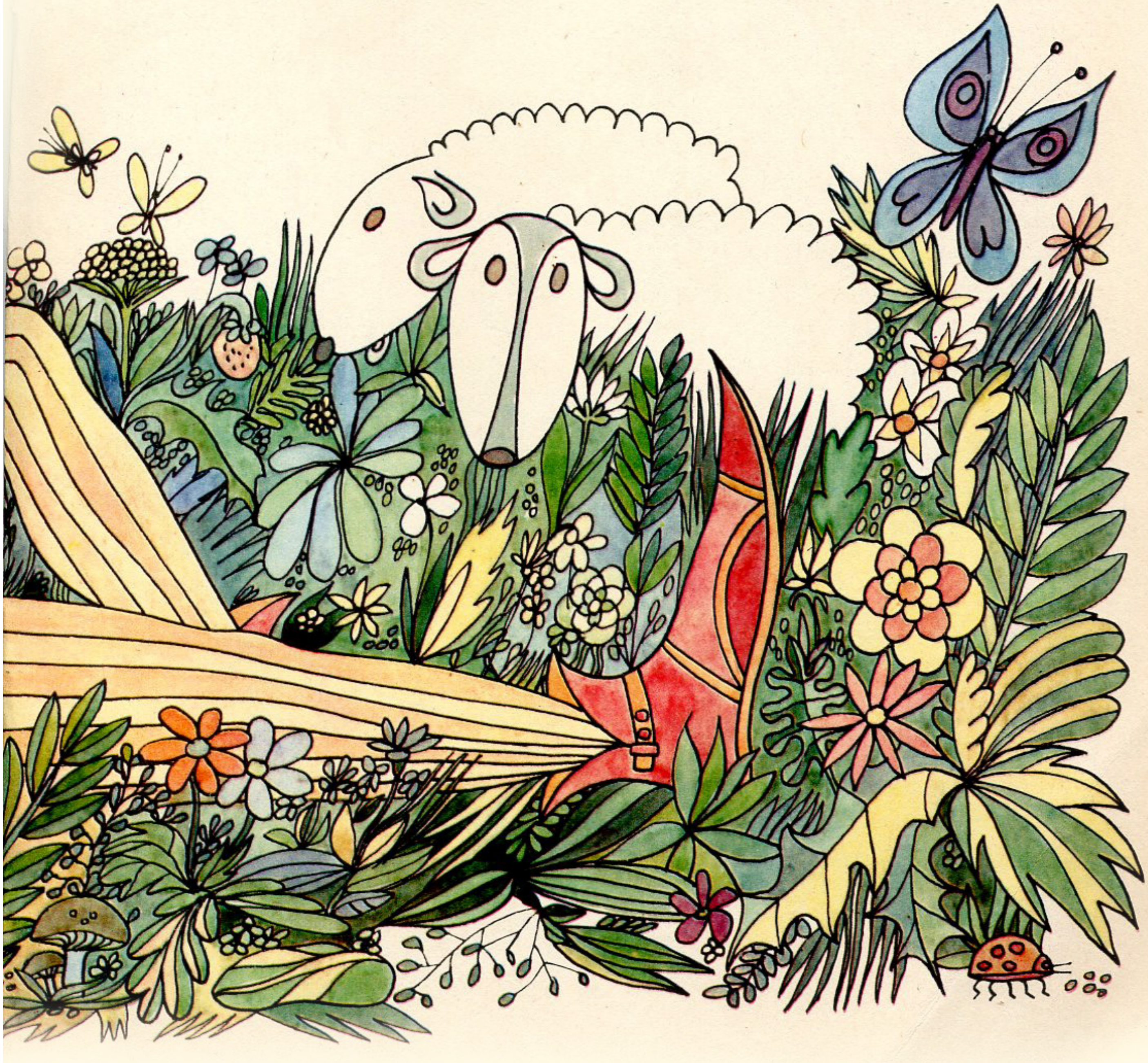
When the poor bird saw that the shepherd was chasing it all the time, asked him as if it were a man:

"Shepherd, why do you chase me in such a way and want to kill me? You know well that we are friends. Nobody comes so early to the pasture as you do, and nobody gets up earlier than I do to sing. I am your best friend. Why do you intend to kill me?"

The shepherd told it everything.

"The lords of the emperor's council have decided it. They considered me to be a man-nonman, you to be a bird-nonbird and I have been sent by the emperor to kill you with this gun-nongun made of lime-tree wood, to take your tongue and to give it to the prince so that he would get well".

The crested lark said then:



"It is not true what the lords have decided. I am a bird as any other bird. I fly, I sing and grow chicks. Moreover I always remain to spend the winter with you. I fly even when the North Wind blows. All the birds fly to the warm countries in autumn while I remain here and I'm not a bit afraid of snow storms and frost. As you see I am a worthy bird. And now about you. How are you a nonman if you take the sheep to pasture? You are the worthiest man. All the peorle trust you their flocks of sheep and you take care of them all the time: when the weather is fine or windy, when it is fog or drizzle. And; they do not consider you a man. Very strange indeed! The lime-tree wood is not nonwood, because, as you know, they make many things of it: rafters for the roofs of the houses and girders. Even spoons, toughs and many, many other things are made of it. The lime-tree wood is a very good one.

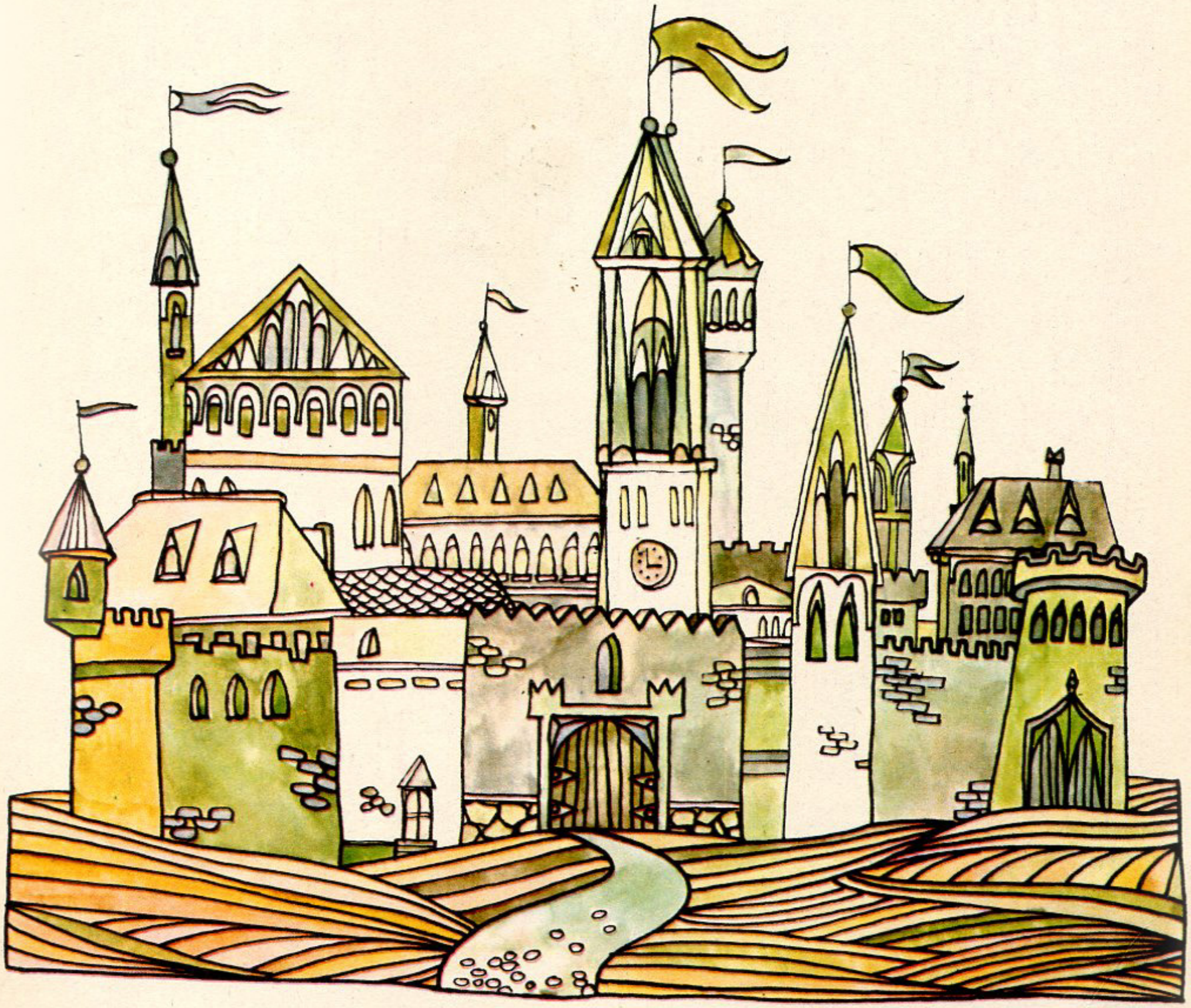
The gun-nongun is not the bow with the arrow either. The bow was the first weapon with which the emperors gained victory one over the other. Gun-nongun, as the sau is the gun made of elder wood, while wood-nonwood is the elder wood because it looks like wood but in fact it has no pith and it is empty in the middle. So wood-nonwood is the elder, gun-nongun is the elder gun, and men-nonmen are those who have sent you — that is the drone lords. The lords and the nobles are men-nonmen as they haven't got any common sense to judge properly.

"I tell you and you must know,
Common sense the lords have no,
No, no, no-o-o!"

After these words the crested lark flew up in the sky. And from that time, whenever it sees a shepherd, filies up and down singing:

"I tell you and you must know,
Common sense the lord have no!
No, no, no-o-o!"

And the crested lark sings in the same way up till today.



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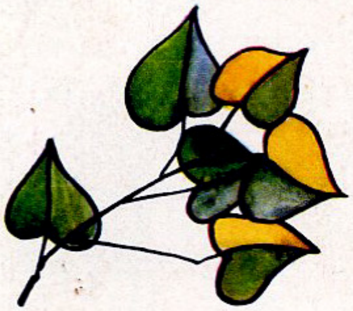

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